

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8710

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4186

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR NO UR SV

SUBJ: SVALBARD

REF: A) STATE 197530 (NOTAL); B) OSLO 4168 (NOTAL)

1. IN HIS SEPTEMBER 10 DISCUSSION WITH DCM, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS VIBE DID NOT COMMENT DIRECTLY ON THE SUBSTANCE OF MIDDLETON'S REMARKS ABOUT SOVIET PRESSURE. AN OPPORTUNITY WILL ARISE AT LUNCHEON WITH VIBE ON SEPTEMBER 16 TO SEE WHETHER THERE ARE DEVELOPMENTS BEARING OUT THE ALARMIST TONE OF MIDDLETON ARTICLE. WE SHARE VIBE'S VIEW, HOWEVER, THAT ARTICLE PROBABLY REFLECTS BRIEFINGS BY MILITARY OFFICERS AT AFNORTH AND IN NORTH NORWAY. INDEED, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD OF NO NEW EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR A CONDOMINIUM OVER SVALBARD.

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, NORWEGIANS HAVE RECEIVED STRONG IMPRESSION SOVIETS ARE PROBING NORWAY'S INTERPRETATION OF THE DEMILITARIZATION PROVISIONS OF THE 1920 TREATY. IN ADDITION TO THE INCIDENTS
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INVOLVING A NORWEGIAN NAVAL VISIT TO SVALBARD LAST MAY (OSLO 2363)

AND NORWEGIAN OVERFLIGHT TO CHECK ON A REPORTED SOVIET SUBMARINE (OSLO 3782), VIBE REVEALED TO DCM SEPTEMBER 11 THAT SOVIET DCM HAS MADE ORAL PROTEST DURING PAST SUMMER TO FOREIGN MINISTRY'S POLAR ADVISER, BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN OVER A HIGH LEVEL NORWEGIAN RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHT OVER SVALBARD. IT REMAINS VIBE'S IMPRESSION THAT SOVIETS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN DENYING THE USE OF SVALBARD TO "NATO BY PROXY" VIA NORWEGIAN MILITARY THAN IN ESTABLISHING THEIR OWN RIGHT TO OPERATE MILITARY UNITS WITHIN THE TREATY AREA.

3. VIBE WAS ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS REGARDING "PROBABLE" SOVIET PRESSURE TO DEMILITARIZE THE NORTH CAPE AREA, AS REPORTED BY "SENIOR OFFICERS" TO MIDDLETON. THIS LED TO DISCUSSION OF KEKKONEN PLAN. VIBE SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD RECENTLY ADDRESSED LETTER TO FINNISH PARLIAMENTARIAN WHO HAD WRITTEN IN FINNISH PRESS THAT NORWAY HAD SHOWN INCREASED INTEREST IN KEKKONEN PLAN. LETTER POINTED OUT THAT NORWAY HAS NOT CHANGED ITS FOREIGN BASE AND NUCLEAR WEAPON POLICY AND CONSIDERS ITSELF DENUCLEARIZED WITHOUT HAVING A FORMAL AGREEMENT ON THIS POINT. ANY FORMAL AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE ALSO TO EMBRACE THE SUPER POWERS. VIBE NOTED IN PASSING THAT NORWAY HAD TAKEN SIMILAR POSITION WITH SOVIETS DURING LAST MARCH SUMMIT AFTER SOVIET SIDE MADE FAVORABLE REFERENCE TO THE KEKKONEN PLAN.

4. IN HIS SEPTEMBER 11 INTERVIEW WITH VERDENS GANG (REFTEL B), FORMIN FRYDENLUND NOTED THAT, AS REGARDS FINNMARK AND ANY EVENTUAL DEMILITARIZATION IN THE NORTH, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN NORWEGIAN POLICY TO HAVE ONLY DEFENSIVE ELEMENTS ON THE SOVIET BORDER. NORWAY'S REAL FORCES HE SAID, ARE STATIONED FURTHER SOUTH.
BYRNE

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